

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6985

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHNES 389

LIMDIS

DEPT PASS TO OTHER POSTS AS DESIRED

EO 11653: GDS

TAGS: MARR EAIR GR TU

SUBJECT: FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS OVER AEGEAN SEA

1. DURING THE COURSE OF A DISCUSSION MONDAY NIGHT THAT EUR/SE DIRECTOR BILL EAGLETON AND I HAD WITH FORIEIGN MINISTER BITSIOS (REPORTED SEPTELS), THE LATTER AT ONE POINT MADE A BRIEF PASSING REFERENCE TO FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS OVER THE AEGEAN SEA. EAGLETON HAD INDICATED THAT HE WAS TRAVELLING ON TO ANKARA, AS WELL AS OTHER POSTS IN CONNECTION WITH HIS CURRENT VISIT TO THIS AREA. BITSIOS HAD BEEN EXPRESSING VIEWS ABOUT THE OVERALL STATE OF GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS (SEPTEL) AND SAID THAT THE GOG WAS LOOKING FOR SIGNS THA TURKEY SHARED GREECE'S DESIRE FOR A NORMALIZATION OF BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS. BITSIOS SAID THAT GREECE WAS SEEKING TO FOLLOW A POLICY OF "DETENTE" WITH TURKEY, BUT THE TURKS WERE EVINCING VERY LITTLE INTEREST.

2. FOR EXAMPLE, BITSIOS SAID, GREECE THOUGHT IT WAS TIME-INDEED, FAR PAST TIME -- TO LIFT THE FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS OVER THE AEGEAN. HE SAID THE GERMANS WERE "ON HIS BAK"

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ALL THE TIME TO TRY TO FIND SOME KIND OF SOLUTION. ICAO

HAD SOME TIME AGO SUGGESTED A COMPROMISE WHICH GREECE FOUND
ACCEPTABLE AND GREECE WAS READY TO COOPERATE WITH TURKEY IN
LIFTING THE RESTRICTIONS. HOWEVER THE TURKS SEEMED
UNWILLING TO BUDGE. BITSIOS ASKED EAGLETON WHETHER HE
WOULD BE INTERESTED OR PREPARED TO RAISE THIS MATTER
WHEN HE SAW TURKISH OFFICIALS IN ANKARA.

3. EAGLETON INDICATED HIS FAMILIARITY WITH THE PROBLEM BUT
SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE GERMANS WERE PURSUING THIS MATTER
IN ANKARA. HE WAS NOT SURE IT WOULD BE EITHER APPROPRIATE
OR WHETHER HE WOULD HAVE A SUITABLE OCCASION TO
DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT DURING HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO
ANKARA. HOWEVER, EAGLETON INDICATED HE WOULD TAKE NOT OF
THE FOREIGN MINISTERS SUGGESTION AND LET HIM
KNOW IF ANYTHING ON THIS SUBJECT TRANSPRIRED WHILE EAGLETON
WAS IN ANKARA.

4. COMMENT: THIS SEEMED MORE LIKE A SUPR-OF-THE-MOMENT
THOUGHT OF BITSIOS RATHER THAN ACAREFULLY CALCULATED PRO-
POSAL THAT THE US BECOME MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED. WE DID NOT DWELL
ON THIS SUBJECT MORE THAN A MOMENT OR TWO AND BITSIOS
SEEMED TO BE POINTING TO IT AS ONE MORE EXAMPLE OF THE
UNCOOPERATIVE ATTITUDE OF THE TURKS.

5. EAGLETON HAS TRAVELED ON TO ANKARA TODAY AND HAS NOT
SEEN THIS MESSAGE. IT SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO HIS
ATTENTION IN ANKARA.

KUBISCH

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